

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02942

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UK, PINT

SUBJECT: THE SHADOW CABINET

REF: (A) LONDON 2572 (B) LONDON 2613

SUMMARY: MARGARET THATCHER ROUNDED OUT HER FRONT-BENCH LIST WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS OF JUNIOR SHADOW SPOKESMEN FEBRUARY 24 AND PARTY CHAIRMAN FEBRUARY 25. HER CHOICES EMPHASIZED UP AND COMING YOUNG CONSERVATIVES WITH A FEW RESURRECTIONS OF HISTORIC NAMES FROM THE TORY PAST. TWO ADDITIONAL "HEATH-MEN" HAVE BEEN DROPPED. MRS. THATCHER
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HAS SKILLFULLY AVOIDED VARIOUS PITFALLS IN HER INITIAL

WEEKS; WHILE HER TOP TEAM CONTAINS SOME NEW FACES, AS YET THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION OF A MAJOR SHIFT IN PARTY POLICIES OR STRATEGIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ONLY A FEW DAYS AFTER HER CONFIRMATION AS PARTY LEADER, MRS. MARGARET THATCHER ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 24 ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF HER TOP PARLIAMENTARY TEAM. APPOINTEES ARE OPPOSITION EQUIVALENTS OF JUNIOR MINISTERS AND BACKSTOP SHADOW MINISTERS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED (REF A).

2. IN MAKING HER SELECTIONS MRS. THATCHER EMPHASIZED YOUNG AND UPCOMING MPS. THREE ARE BRAND NEW TO FRONT-BENCH DUTIES (NORMAN LAMONT, THOMAS KING AND MALCOLM RIFKIND). ANOTHER APPOINTEE (KEITH SPEED) IS NEWLY BACK IN COMMONS, AFTER LOSING HIS SEAT IN THE FEBRUARY 1974 ELECTION; SPEED HAD HELD OFFICE AS A JUNIOR MINISTER DURING THE HEATH ADMINISTRATION 1970-74. TWO OTHERS (JOHN NOTT AND MICHAEL ALISON) HAD LOST THEIR JOBS IN THE HEATH SHADOW LINE-UP. TWO MORE (HAMISH GRAY AND DR. GERARD VAUGHAN) MOVE FROM POSITIONS IN THE WHIP'S OFFICE TO THE FRONT BENCH.

3. THE TWO DROPPED SPOKESMEN WERE ANTHONY BUCK, WHO SERVED AS CAMPAIGN MANAGER IN THE LEADERSHIP ELECTION FOR SIR GEOFFREY HOWE; AND DAVID LANE, WHO PREVIOUSLY ASSISTED SIR KEITH JOSEPH ON HOME AFFAIRS.

4. OTHER JUNIOR SPOKESMEN CONTINUE IN THEIR PREVIOUS POSITIONS WITH SOME CHANGES IN POSITION. CHRISTOPHER TUGENDHAT MOVES FROM EMPLOYMENT TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALONG WITH ELDON GRIFFITHS, WHO MOVES FROM INDUSTRY. MARCUS FOX MOVES FROM HOUSING TO ENVIRONMENT (TRANSPORT) EXCHANGING PLACES WITH HUGH ROSSI. CRANLEY ONSLOW MOVES FROM SOCIAL SERVICES TO DEFENSE. THE WHIP'S OFFICE REMAINS THE SAME WITH TWO VACANCIES YET TO BE FILLED. WILLIAM SHELTON WAS APPOINTED AS AN ADDITIONAL PPS TO MRS. THATCHER, A NEW POSITION.

5. ON FEBRUARY 25, MRS. THATCHER ANNOUNCED LORD THORNEY-CONFIDENTIAL

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CROFT WOULD BE THE PARTY CHAIRMAN, REPLACING WHITELAW, WITH ANGUS MAUDE AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND CONCURRENTLY HEAD OF THE CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT REPLACING IAN GILMOUR. BOTH WILL BE MEMBERS OF THE SHADOW CABINET. BOTH ARE "VETERAN NEWCOMERS," HAVING EARLIER SERVED THE PARTY WITH SOME DISTINCTION. THORNEYCROFT IS AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKER, HAS HAD A LOT OF PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIENCE IN BOTH HOUSES, AND HAS HAD A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN

INDUSTRY. HE ALSO HAS A RECORD FOR OPPOSITION TO EXPAND-
ED PUBLIC EXPENDITURES, AND RESIGNED FROM TREASURY ON
THIS POINT IN 1958. MAUDE LOST HIS FRONT BENCH POSITION
IN 1966 BECAUSE OF AN ARTICLE HE WROTE CRITICAL OF PARTY
LEADERSHIP.

6. THE APPOINTMENTS ARE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF MRS.
THATCHER'S POLICY OF CONTINUITY COMBINED WITH CHANGE.
SHE HAS SUCCEEDED IN RETAINING A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF
EXPERIENCE IN HER SHADOW CABINET WHILE PROVIDING A NUMBER

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OF NEW FACES. SHE WANTS TO GIVE THE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP A NEW LOOK AND TO BRING IN YOUNG MPS FOR EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE.

7. ONE OF THE POSSIBLE PITFALLS MRS. THATCHER HAS AVOIDED RELATES TO SIR KEITH JOSEPH. RATHER THAN GIVING HIM THE PORTFOLIO HE OPENLY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN (TREASURY AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS), MRS. THATCHER HAS KEPT HIM AS A RESIDENT "THINK TANK" EXPERT TO DEVELOP AND DIRECT POLICY STUDIES. THIS AVOIDS A SITUATION IN WHICH

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OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SHADOW CABINET MIGHT REFUSE TO SERVE WITH SIR KEITH BECAUSE OF HIS ALLEGED MONETARIST VIEWS ON COMBATING INFLATION. AT THE SAME TIME SHE HAS BEEN ABLE TO KEEP SIR KEITH CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH HER NEW LEADERSHIP IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY, LEAVING HER WITH THE FULL OPTION OF ACCEPTING OR REJECTING HIS ADVICE.

8. HER APPOINTMENT OF REGINALD MAUDLING (REF B) CONTINUES TO BE PERHAPS HER MOST DRAMATIC CHANGE. MAUDLING'S RETURN TO THE FRONT BENCH HAS BEEN APPLAUDED BY SOME PARTS OF THE PARTY WHICH WERE MOST UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT HER CANDIDACY. FURTHERMORE, MAUDLING'S OWN EXPERIENCE IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD IS A REAL ADDITION TO THE STRENGTH OF HER TEAM. MRS. THATCHER HAS STRENGTHENED THE SHADOW FCO ROLE BY GIVING MAUDLING AS ASSISTANTS TUGENDHAT AND GRIFFITHS, BOTH OF WHOM ARE CONSIDERED HARD-WORKING AND CAPABLE. TUGENDHAT, WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED FOR A LONG TIME IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS WORK, HAS BEEN ASSIGNED SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EC REFERENDUM.

9. MRS. THATCHER HAS ALSO SUCCESSFULLY SKATED THROUGH THE POSSIBLE PROBLEMS OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH HEATH. SHE HAS MADE IT CLEAR PUBLICLY THAT SHE WOULD BE HAPPY IF HEATH JOINED HER SHADOW CABINET, AND BOTH SHE AND HE HAVE OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS REMAINING OUT IS HIS DECISION. HEATH HAS ALSO REMOVED HIMSELF CONVENIENTLY FROM THE SCENE BY TAKING AN EXTENDED VACATION IN SPAIN.

10. SEPARATE FROM THESE DEVELOPMENTS, FORTUNE CONTINUES TO SMILE ON MRS. THATCHER. SHE MADE A TRIUMPHAL VISIT TO SCOTLAND OVER LAST WEEKEND, RECEIVING A DEMONSTRATIVE RECEPTION. IN PARLIAMENT ITSELF, INTERNAL DIVISIONS IN THE LABOR PARTY HAVE PERMITTED HER TO REMAIN SOMEWHAT INACTIVE. AT THE SAME TIME THE CONSERVATIVES ARE MAKING SOME PROGRESS IN OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT'S INDUSTRY BILL AND IN THEIR ATTACK ON ESTATE TAX LEGISLATION. THE CON-

TROVERSY OVER THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE ACCOUNT AND SURFACING OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS BY THE COMMUNIST DAILY, MORNING STAR, HAVE ALSO GIVEN THE CONSERVATIVES A BREATHING SPACE. (LONDON 2799)

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11. ALL IN ALL, THE COMBINATION OF TIMING, GOOD LUCK AND SHREWD PLANNING SEEMS TO BE PAYING OFF. WITHIN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY ITSELF THE HONEYMOON ATMOSPHERE OF THE FIRST WEEKS CONTINUES. THERE HAVE BEEN AS YET NO SIGNS OF DIFFICULTY FROM TWO POTENTIAL SOURCES OF TROUBLE: (1) THE NEW BACK-BENCHERS WHO WERE EITHER SACKED OR CHOSE NOT TO CONTINUE IN THEIR SHADOW ROLES (RIPPON, WALKER, CARR, ETC.) AND (2) THE NOW RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP ENDEARINGLY REFERRED TO AS "BACKWOODSMEN," MOST OF WHOM ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LANDED ARISTOCRACY. THE LATTER SUPPORTED WHITELAW ON THE SECOND BALLOT AND FOUND IN 1975 "THE GROCER'S DAUGHTER" NO MORE APPETIZING A PROSPECTIVE LEADER THAN THEY FOUND HEATH IN 1965. THEY HAVE PERHAPS BEEN SOMEWHAT REASSURED BY THE THORNEYCROFT-MAUDE APPOINTMENTS.

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